



# Montgomery County Council

*From the Office of Councilmember Phil Andrews*

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**For Immediate Release**

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## **Local & State Legislators: ICC's High Tolls Would Price Thousands off Road**

Local and state legislators revealed today in a morning Rockville news conference that Maryland plans to charge such high tolls on the proposed ICC highway that thousands of drivers would be priced out of using a highway that they paid to build, according to the State's own findings in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS).

Councilmember Phil Andrews criticized the proposed tolls and was joined by State Delegate Adrienne Mandel, fellow County Councilmember Marilyn Praisner, and Takoma Park City Councilmember Marc Elrich.

"According to the DEIS, the cost of a round-trip commute on the ICC during rush hour would be almost \$6 per day, about \$1,500 per year at the assumed toll rate of 17 cents a mile," said Andrews. "The DEIS assumes that by 2010 -- the soonest the State says that the highway could be completed -- that the cost of a round-trip rush-hour commute would be nearly \$7 per day -- which would cost daily commuters \$1,700 per year.

"The tolls planned for the proposed ICC are very high tolls compared to most other toll roads in the U.S. For example, the toll rate per mile charged on the New Jersey turnpike is 5 cents per mile and on the Pennsylvania turnpike it is 6 cents per mile.

"I've knocked on thousands of door in my district in the past few months and spoken with more than 1,000 constituents. Not a single one knew of the very high tolls that Maryland plans for the proposed ICC. The public needs to know this information before any decision is made to build the ICC.

(more...)

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“Maryland plans to charge these very high tolls to all drivers who use the proposed ICC even though its own findings in the DEIS show that toll rate of 17 cents a mile used as the working assumption in the DEIS would keep more than 10,000 drivers a day from using the highway compared to a lower but still-high toll of 13 cents a mile during rush hour.”

“This 18-mile swath of concrete won’t serve working people and people on fixed incomes,” said Delegate Mandel of District 19. “Twenty-five percent of the jobs in this County pay \$30,000 or less. A family making \$40,000 would pay 5 percent of their annual take-home pay to commute on the ICC every day.”

“The ICC would be a Lexus road – accessible to some,” said Councilmember Praisner. “State Transportation Secretary Flanagan has said that the ICC will be forever congestion-free. That’s because high tolls will discourage usage. Neighborhood roads, as a result, will not see the relief promised. And \$820 million in needed transportation projects on the County’s priority list right now – like a new Glenmont Metro garage – will get short shrift.”

“According to the State Highway Administration’s own numbers, the ICC will make Beltway traffic worse,” said Takoma Park City Councilman Elrich. “It makes every north-south connector worse. And even after it’s built, traffic congestion would continue to get worse.”

“State Highway officials claim that tolls rates have yet to be determined, “ said Andrews. “The fact is, however, that ALL of the rush-hour toll levels that the State Highway Administration studied in the DEIS are much higher than the national average of 9 cents per mile – and the toll rate that they assumed as most-likely (17 cents per mile in 2004 and 20 cents per mile in 2010) is twice the national average.

“Unless the State is going to disavow its own assumptions and findings – in which case the DEIS isn’t worth the paper it’s printed on -- the only question remaining is whether the tolls on the ICC would be high, very high, or outrageously high.”

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